

# **Legislative Successes and Failures for Conservatism in 2010**

This document highlights *some* of the legislative successes and failures for conservatism in the House in 2010. **This list is not intended to be exhaustive and is not written for mass circulation.**

## **Successes for Conservatism**

- Defeating a bill on suspension (which requires a 2/3 vote majority) that is the poster child for unnecessary spending. The bill spends nearly \$50 million on federal land acquisition for beachfront property on a Caribbean Island when the unemployment rate is 10%. The bill is insulting to the taxpayer – even more so when most Americans do not have the luxury of taking an expensive family vacation to visit the site. The bill also undermines private property rights by not including safeguards to ensure private property owners giving up their land are “willing sellers;” thus allowing the National Park Service to possibly claim property from unwilling parties - resulting in eminent domain concerns for some conservatives (H.R. 3726). *The bill, unfortunately, was later passed during regular order of the House by a simple majority, but its failure to garner 2/3 votes is an indication that Democrats are pushing an irresponsible agenda.*

## **Failures for Conservatism**

- Passing three bills that authorize \$121 million, \$174 million, and \$292 million in an attempt to resolve outstanding Indian water rights claims. However, some conservatives have expressed concern that Congress lacks sufficient information to assess whether the authorization level of this bills are appropriate. Some conservatives have argued that prematurely reaching a settlement on the claims will increase U.S. liability than compared to existing law. The DOI testified in the Natural Resources Committee last year that they were: “concerned about the large Federal contribution in the trust fund and believe there should be further discussion with the parties about the activities included in this part of the settlement,” and could not support the bill at the time because of this and other concerns. Some conservative have stated that without transparent and consistent answers from the Administration, they cannot support H.R. 3254 – especially with the large amount of taxpayer funding necessary to reach a settlement. Congress should not spend hundreds of millions of American taxpayer dollars until there is sufficient information (H.R. 3254, H.R. 3342, and H.R. 1065).
- Passing a joint resolution that includes a 59.4% increase to the debt limit in three years. This legislation provides the sixth debt limit increase in three years. Should this legislation be enacted, over this period, the debt limit will have increased

from \$8.97 trillion to \$14.29 trillion—an increase of \$5.33 trillion or 59.4%. The bill could also lead to tax increases by making it harder to maintain some tax cuts that exist under current law (of note the capital gains/dividend tax cuts and the lower 35% income tax rate). The threat of sequestration could be used by proponents of tax increases to try and force through higher taxes. The legislation does not impose any limits (even for spending increases above those assumed in CBO's baseline) for the 40% of the federal budget that consists of discretionary spending (H.J. Res. 45).